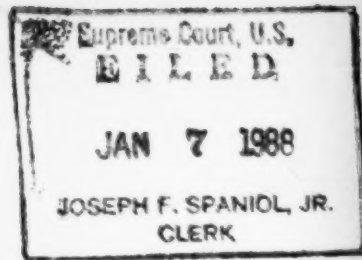


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No.

**In The  
SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES**

October Term, 1987

**RICHARD L. DUGGER, Secretary, Florida  
Department of Offender Rehabilitation**

**Petitioner,**

**v.**

**BENITO MARRERO,**

**Respondent.**

**On Petition for Writ of Certiorari  
To The United States Court of Appeals  
For the Eleventh Circuit**

**BRIEF OF PETITIONER ON JURISDICTION**

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## QUESTIONS PRESENTED

### I.

DID THE ELEVENTH CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS MISAPPLY SOLEM V. HELM, 463 U.S. 277, 103 S.C.T. 3001, 77 L.ED.2D 637 (1983) WHEN IT HELD THE DISTRICT COURT MUST ENGAGE IN AN EXTENSIVE PROPORTIONALITY REVIEW WHERE THE CONSECUTIVE SENTENCES IMPOSED BY THE STATE COURT WERE WITHIN THE STATUTORY MAXIMUMS AND THE DEFENDANT WAS ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE?

### II.

DOES THE ELEVENTH CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS' DECISION IN THIS CASE DIRECTLY CONFLICT WITH DECISIONS FROM BOTH THE FOURTH AND FIFTH CIRCUITS ON THE APPLICABILITY OF SOLEM V. HELM, 463 U.S. 277 (1983) -TO STATE SENTENCES WHICH DO NOT INVOLVE LIFE SENTENCES WITHOUT ELIGIBILITY FOR PAROLE?



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REPORT OF THE

COMMISSIONER OF THE

LAND OFFICE

FOR THE YEAR

ENDING

1890

AND

THE

PROGRESS

OF THE

LAND OFFICE

IN

1890



### OPINION BELOW

The opinion of the court of appeals, Eleventh Circuit, is reported as Marrero v. Dugger, 823 F.2d 1468 (11th Cir. 1987). This opinion appears in the appendix as A 1 - 36. The opinion includes a copy of the magistrate's report and recommendation.

### JURISDICTIONAL STATEMENT

The Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals (herein after called the Eleventh Circuit) rendered its opinion on August 7, 1987. Timely petitions for rehearing and rehearing en banc were filed; the petitions were denied on October 16, 1987. The Eleventh Circuit's mandate was issued on October 29, 1987. This Court has jurisdiction to hear this cause pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §2254(1) and 28 U.S.C. §2101(c).

## CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATUTORY PROVISIONS

The Eighth Amendment to the United States Constitution provides:

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Article III, Sections 1 and 2 of the Constitution of the United States provide:

SECTION 1. The judicial Power of the United States, shall be vested in one supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish. The Judges, both of the supreme and inferior Courts, shall hold their Offices during good Behaviour, and shall, at stated Times, receive for their Services, a Compensation, which shall not be diminished during their Continuance in Office.

SECTION 2. The judicial Power shall extend to all Cases, in Law and Equity, arising under this Constitution, and Laws of the United States, and Treaties made, or which shall be made, under their Authority; to all Cases affecting Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls; to all Cases of admiralty and maritime Jurisdiction; to Controversies to which the United States shall be Party; to Controver-

sies between two or more States; between a State and Citizens of different States; between Citizens of the same State claiming Lands under Grants of different States, and between a State, or Citizens thereof, and foreign States Citizens or Subjects.

**28 U.S.C. §1254(1)** provides:

Cases in the courts of appeal may be reviewed by the Supreme Court by the following methods: (1) By writ of certiorari granted upon a petition of any party to any civil or criminal case, before or after rendition of judgment or decree;

**28 U.S.C. §2101(c)** provides:

(c) Any other appeal or any writ of certiorari intended to bring any judgment or decree in a civil action, suit or proceeding before the Supreme Court for review shall be taken or applied for within ninety days after the entry of such judgment or decree. A justice of the Supreme Court, for good cause shown, may extend the time for applying for a writ of certiorari for a period not exceeding sixty days.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Respondent, Benito Marrero, was convicted on November 20, 1975, in the Sixth Judicial Circuit in and for Pasco County, Florida of twelve counts of burglary and twelve grand thefts. He was sentenced to the statutory maximum on each count with each sentence to run consecutively. A direct appeal was taken to the Second District Court of Appeal, State of Florida. The Second District per curiam affirmed.

On September 4, 1979, Marrero filed a motion pursuant to Florida Rule of Criminal Procedure 3.850 to vacate, set aside or correct the sentence. The motion was denied on September 20, 1979. The denial of the 3.850 was upheld by the Second District on December 21, 1979.

Respondent next filed a Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus in the United States District Court for the Middle District of

Florida. After submission of memoranda, the Magistrate filed a report and recommendation recommending relief be denied. Objections to the report and recommendation were duly filed. On July 9, 1981, the district judge entered an Order denying habeas relief. A notice of appeal was filed, and the district judge issued a certificate of probable cause. The United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit affirmed the District Court's denial of habeas relief. A Petition for Writ of Certiorari was filed in the United States Supreme Court. That court remanded the case for reconsideration in light of Solem v. Helm, 463 U.S. 277, 103 S.Ct. 3001, 77 L.Ed.2d 637 (1983). See Marrero v. Wainwright, 77 L.Ed.2d 1407 (1983).

On remand, the parties submitted briefs addressing respondent's claim of cruel and unusual punishment in view of Solem v. Helm,

supra. The magistrate filed a report and recommendation wherein he distinguished this case from Solem v. Helm on the basis of parole eligibility. The report incorporated the prior report and recommendation which relied on Rummel v. Estelle, 445 U.S. 263, 100 S.Ct. 1133, 63 L.Ed.2d 382 (1980). The district judge, after reviewing the magistrate's report, objections by respondent and the record, adopted and confirmed the report and recommendation and denied habeas relief.

On appeal, the Eleventh Circuit reversed the district court's holding and remanded for an extensive proportionality review. The state seeks certiorari review of this decision.

## BASIS OF FEDERAL JURISDICTION

The basis of federal jurisdiction in this court of first instance was a petition for writ of habeas corpus filed pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §2254.



## REASONS FOR GRANTING THE WRIT

### A.

THE OPINION BELOW, WHICH REQUIRES THE DISTRICT COURT ON FEDERAL HABEAS OF A STATE COURT SENTENCING TO HAVE AN EXTENSIVE PROPORTIONALITY REVIEW EVEN HERE NO LIFE SENTENCE WITHOUT PAROLE ELIGIBILITY IS INVOLVED, MIS-APPLIES THIS COURT'S DECISION IN SOLEM V. HELM, 463 U.S. 277 (1983).

The Eleventh Circuit's decision in this case impermissibly expands this Court's decision in Solem v. Helm, 463 U.S. 277 (1983) beyond sentences involving life sentences without parole pursuant to recidivist statutes. Solem itself involved such a life sentence for a non-violent crime given under an enhancement statute. Thus, that defendant received the ultimate punishment, other than death, for relatively minor offenses. The facts of this case are clearly distinguishable from Solem.

This case does not involve a life sentence nor an enhancement statute. Respondent



was convicted of twelve burglaries and twelve grand thefts, twenty four (24) separate offenses. Each individual sentence given was within the statutory maximum provided by the legislature. It has never been held by any court that a term of imprisonment of fifteen years for burglary or five years for grand theft was violative of the Eighth Amendment's proscription against cruel and unusual punishment. Yet the majority opinion in this case suggests that by making the sentences for separate offenses run consecutive, they become unconstitutional.

The Eleventh Circuit's opinion in this case requires an extensive review by the federal courts of all multiple sentences imposed by a state court even though each sentence is proper. In Albernaz v. United States, 450 U.S. 333 (1981), this Court indicated the double jeopardy clause of the Fifth Amendment does not prohibit the

imposition of consecutive sentences in this type of situation, yet the circuit court's opinion could prevent a state from imposing a sentence for each separate crime. A state prisoner has no constitutional right either to serve multiple sentences concurrently or to go unpunished for some offenses. It is not the function of the federal courts to generally supervise state court sentences to determine which sentences merit consecutive treatment.

In Solem v. Helm, supra., this Court made it clear that an extensive proportionality analysis would be warranted in only the rarest of cases. This Court said:

. . . , we do not adopt or imply approval of a general rule of appellate review of sentences. Absent specific authority, it is not the role of an appellate court to substitute its judgment for that of the sentencing court as to the appropriateness of a particular sentence; rather, in applying the Eighth Amendment the appellate court decides only whether the sentence under review is within constitu-

tional limits. In view of the substantial deference that must be accorded legislatures and sentencing courts, a reviewing court rarely will be required to engage in extended analysis to determine that a sentence is not constitutionally disproportionate.

(77 L.Ed.2d at 649).

Furthermore, this Court indicated Solem does not overrule Rummel v. Estelle, 445 U.S. 263, 100 S.Ct. 1133, 63 L.Ed.2d 382 (1980), but was consistent with it and Rummel should apply in a similar factual situation.

The defendant in Rummel was given a life sentence after his third conviction for a noncapital felony. A divided Fifth Circuit panel on federal habeas held the sentence violative of the Eighth Amendment because it was grossly disproportionate. The en banc court reversed, and this Court affirmed. Of major importance to the court was the fact that Rummel was eligible for parole. Rummel teaches us that the federal courts should not undertake a general supervisory role over

state sentencing matters; sentence durations are concerns of the legislature. Accord, Hutto v. Davis, 454 U.S. 370, 102 S.Ct. 703, 70 L.Ed.2d 556 (1982).

Since this case does not involve the extreme situation addressed in Solem, this Court's decisions in Rummel and Davis should be applied here. Respondent, like Rummel, was sentenced to a lengthy term of imprisonment but was eligible for parole.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>/ Respondent was in fact paroled in November, 1985 after serving ten (10) years.

B.

THE DECISION OF THE ELEVENTH CIRCUIT IN THIS CASE CONFLICTS WITH DECISIONS FROM BOTH THE FOURTH AND FIFTH CIRCUITS ON THE APPLICABILITY OF SOLEM V. HELM TO STATE SENTENCES NOT INVOLVING LIFE SENTENCES WITHOUT PAROLE ELIGIBILITY.

At least two of the circuit courts have held an extensive proportionality review under Solem v. Helm, supra., is limited to cases involving life sentences without eligibility for parole. The Eleventh Circuit's opinion in this case conflicts with these circuits by requiring an extensive Solem analysis in every challenge to a sentence under the Eighth Amendment.

In United States v. Rhodes, 779 F.2d 1019 (4th Cir. 1985), the defendants challenged their sentences of 75 years and 50 years as being disproportionate under the Eighth Amendment. The court rejected their claims and stated, ". . ., it seems to us that Solem requires an extensive proportion-

ality analysis only in those cases involving life sentences without parole." Ibid. at 1028. The Fifth Circuit in Moreno v. Estelle, 717 F.2d 171 (5th Cir. 1983), likewise held an extensive analysis is not necessary in every habeas corpus case raising an Eighth Amendment claim. Moreno was given a life sentence for aggravated assault, this being his third felony conviction. He would be eligible for parole after twenty (20) years. In upholding the sentence the court said, "Rummel still provides the rule in cases with fact situations not clearly distinguishable from that in Rummel itself. Ibid. at 180. Accord, Chandler v. Jones, 813 F.2d 773 (6th Cir. 1987).

The cases applying Rummel all involve a term of years or life sentences with parole eligibility. The case before us involves a term of years with parole eligibility. Rummel is equally applicable here.

The Eleventh Circuit opinion, which requires a full-blown proportionality analysis in every multiple sentence case, could open a flow gate of habeas litigation in the federal courts. This would result in the federal judiciary acting as the final arbiter of state sentencing matters, a situation this Court has repeatedly cautioned against. See, Rummell v. Estelle, supra. Hutto v. Davis, supra, and Solem v. Helm, supra. Such an unwarranted odyssey into state sentencing matters would ultimately require directives from the federal courts to the state courts as to which of several similar offenses permit imprisonment and which do not; a chaotic situation at best.

Petitioner respectfully submits certiorari review should be granted in this case to lend guidance to the other federal courts on the scope and limitations of the extensive proportionality analysis outlined in Solem v.



Helm, supra. It is clear from the split of opinion among the circuit courts that such guidance is necessary to maintain uniformity among the circuits on the same issue.

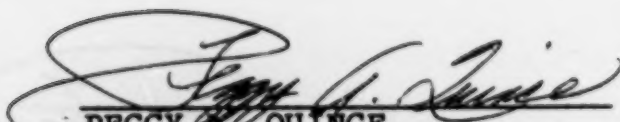


### CONCLUSION

The decision of the Eleventh Circuit in this case misapplies this Court's ruling in Solem v. Helm and conflicts with other circuits on the same issue of law. Therefore, Petitioner urges this Court to grant certiorari review and reverse the ruling of the Eleventh Circuit.

Respectfully submitted,

ROBERT A. BUTTERWORTH  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

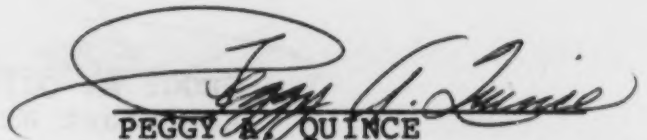


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COUNSEL FOR PETITIONER

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I PEGGY A. QUINCE, counsel for petitioner and a member of the Bar of the United States Supreme Court, hereby certify that on the 7th day of January, 1988, I served three copies of the Petition for Writ of Certiorari to the Supreme Court of Florida on Donald S. Cambas, Attorney for Respondent, 5015 South Florida Avenue, Suite 400, Post Office Box 1108, Lakeland, Florida 33802, by a duly addressed envelope with postage prepaid.



PEGGY A. QUINCE  
Assistant Attorney General

COUNSEL FOR PETITIONER

No.

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

October Term, 1987

RICHARD L. DUGGER, Secretary, Florida  
Department of Offender Rehabilitation,

Petitioner,

v.

BENITO MARRERO,

Respondent.

PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE  
UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE ELEVENTH CIRCUIT

A P P E N D I X

THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

WASHINGTON, D. C.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

WASHINGTON, D. C.

RECEIVED

SEPTEMBER 1, 1917

BY MAIL

FOR THE SECRETARY

WASHINGTON, D. C.

RECEIVED  
SEPTEMBER 1, 1917  
BY MAIL

FOR THE SECRETARY

**Benito MARRERO, Petitioner-Appellant,**

**v.**

**Richard L. DUGGER and Jim Smith,**

**Respondents-Appellees.**

**No. 85-3746.**

**United States Court of Appeal,  
Eleventh Circuit.**

**Aug. 7, 1987.**

A defendant who was convicted of 12 counts of breaking and entering and 12 counts of grand theft and was sentenced to 240 years to be served consecutively filed petition of habeas relief. The United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida, No. 80-114-Civ-T-10, Wm. Terrell Hodges, Chief Judge, rejected his claims, and petitioner appealed. The Court of Appeals, 690 F.2d 906, affirmed. The United States Supreme Court, 463 U.S. 1223, 103 S.Ct. 3567, 77 L.Ed.2d 1407, vacated and remanded for reconsideration in light of *Solem v. Helm*. The

Court of Appeals, 715 F.2d 578, remanded to the District Court for reconsideration. On remand, the district court denied relief and petitioner appealed. The Court of Appeals, Godbold, Circuit Judge, held that remand was required in order for district court to reconsider its decision, where court failed to give a basis for holding that case **Solem v. Helm** was not applicable to petitioner's sentence or to give basis for extracting factor of eligibility for parole as determinative to proportionality issue.

Reversed and remanded.

Roney, Chief Judge, filed a dissenting opinion.

#### **Criminal Law 1192**

Sentencing court was required to reconsider for a second time proportionality of consecutive sentences totalling 240 years in light of **Solem v. Helm**, where it had been ordered by United States Supreme Court to reconsider decision on that basis, but gave no

basis for holding that ~~Helm~~ decision was not applicable and gave no basis for extracting the sole factor of eligibility for parole and resting its decision on that factor alone, although issue of habeas petitioner's eligibility for parole factor had been before the Supreme Court.

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Appeal from the United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida.

Before RONEY, Chief Judge, GODBOLD, Circuit Judge and ATKINS\*, Senior District Judge.

GODBOLD, Circuit Judge:

Benito Marrero petitioned for habeas corpus relief, alleging three constitutional violations: consecutive sentences imposed on him totalling 240 years were disproportionate

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\* Honorable C. Clyde Atkins, Senior U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Florida, sitting by designation.

to the crime and constituted cruel and unusual punishment in violation of the Eighth Amendment; the admission of custodial statements violated his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination; and his trial and sentence under a statute that was amended before trial denied him due process and equal protection.

The district court rejected all three of Marrero's claims. This court affirmed. **Marrero v. Wainwright**, 690 F.2d 906 (11th Cir. 1982). The Supreme Court vacated our decision and remanded for further consideration in light of **Solem v. Helm**, 463 U.S. 277, 103 S.Ct. 3001, 77 L.Ed.2d 637 (1983). **Marrero v. Wainwright**, 463 U.S. 1223, 103 S.Ct. 3567, 77 L.Ed.2d 1407 (1983). This court, in turn, remanded to the district court for reconsideration under **Helm**. **Marrero v. Wainwright**, 715 F.2d 578 (11th Cir. 1983).



On remand the district court concluded that the only issue properly before it was Marrero's claim that his sentence constituted cruel and unusual punishment because this was the only issue addressed in *Solem v. Helm*. We agree. The district court did not, however, comply with the mandate of the Supreme Court requiring that on remand the Eighth Amendment claim be reconsidered under *Helm*. The case must therefore be reversed and remanded to the district court for compliance with the Supreme Court's directive.

Marrero entered 12 unoccupied rooms in the same motel, each having a different key, during three days over a period of a month, and stole a television set from each room.<sup>1</sup> The motel is located at the intersection of Interstate Highway 75 and State Road 54, in a

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<sup>1</sup> Marrero entered one unoccupied room on June 24, 1975, seven unoccupied rooms on July 10, and four unoccupied rooms on July 23.

rural area of Florida. The Florida map reveals that this road intersection is in Pasco County, a largely rural county north of Tampa which abuts the Gulf of Mexico on the west and has only one sizable town.

Marrero was charged in three separate informations. They alleged a total of 12 counts of breaking and entering<sup>2</sup> and 12 counts of grand theft of a television set.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The informations contained identical recitals, except as to room numbers, as follows:

[defendant did] break and enter a certain building other than a dwelling house, to wit: that certain building known as motel room No. \_\_\_\_\_, located at Day's Inn of Zephyrhills No. 6076, Interstate 75 and State Road 54 . . . with intent then and there to commit a felony, to wit: grand larceny, contrary to Chapter 810.02, Florida Statutes.

<sup>3</sup> Each theft count charged felonious taking of a television set of a value in excess of \$100, the property of Day's Inn motel.

A jury convicted Marrero of all 24 counts. He was given 12 "stacked" maximum 15 year sentences for the 12 breaking and entering charges, plus 12 "stacked" maximum five year sentences for the 12 thefts, a total of 20 years for the two offenses committed in each of 12 rooms, a grand total of 240 years.<sup>4</sup>

A U.S. magistrate first considered Marrero's federal petition in 1980 and recommended denying relief. In 1981 the district court entered an order stating that it had considered the magistrate's report and recommendation and made an independent examination of the file and that the petition was

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<sup>4</sup> In his merits appeal Marrero questioned whether each of the separate unoccupied rooms, all in the same occupied motel building, could properly be treated as a separate "unoccupied dwelling." The state court affirmed without comment. Marrero filed a 3.850 petition, and it was denied and the denial affirmed without opinion.

denied. The court did not adopt the magistrate's findings or accept his report and gave no further reasons for its decision.

Marrero appealed, and in 1982 this court rejected Marrero's Eighth Amendment argument and his other contentions, without any comment other than a conclusory statement that they lacked merit. 690 F.2d 906.

In 1983 the Supreme Court decided **Helm**. The Court held that the constitutional principle of proportionality applies to felony prison sentences under the Eighth Amendment:

In sum, a court's proportionality analysis under the Eighth Amendment should be guided by objective criteria, including (i) the gravity of the offense and the harshness of the penalty; (ii) the sentences imposed on other criminals in the same jurisdiction; and (iii) the sentences imposed for commission of the same crime in other jurisdictions.

**Helm**, 463 U.S. at 292, 103 S.Ct. at 3010. In applying this framework to Helm's sentence of

life imprisonment without parole the Supreme Court had to distinguish **Rummel**, in which it had found that a life sentence mandated by a Texas recidivist statute did not violate the Eighth Amendment. In **Helm** the Court emphasized that the possibility of parole had been critical to its decision that **Rummel's** sentence was not cruel and unusual punishment and that **Helm's** sentence of life imprisonment without possibility of parole clearly distinguished it from **Rummel**. *Id.* at 297, 303 n. 32, 103 S.Ct. at 3013, 3017 n. 32. Thus, while the possibility of parole was a significant factor in the analysis of proportionality, it was simply one factor relevant to prong (i) of the proportionality analysis, which included but was not limited to the three stated factors.

When reconciling its decision in **Helm** with **Rummel** the Court made it clear that **Rummel** had only rejected "a proportionality

challenge to a particular sentence" and that, because *Rummel* "offered no standards for determining when an Eighth Amendment violation has occurred, it is controlling only in a similar factual situation." *Id.* at 303 n. 32, 103 S.Ct. at 3017 n. 32. A "similar factual situation" is narrower than that class of cases in which there is a possibility of parole; a contrary interpretation would render *Helm* applicable only in those cases where a defendant is not eligible for parole - a limitation that would be inconsistent with the reasoning in that case. In *Helm* the Court did not say that the possibility of parole would always be sufficient to save a sentence from being struck down under the Eighth Amendment, nor did it say that the availability of parole negated the need to review the sentence for proportionality under the three-part framework it had just delineated. To the contrary, the Court said that



criminal sentences are subject to proportionality review and that even a single day in prison may be unconstitutional in some circumstances. *Id.* at 290, 103 S.Ct. at 3009.

When this case reached the district court on remand, the court granted Marrero's motion for leave to file a supplemental brief. In his supplemental memorandum of law Marrero set out the proportionality analysis language of *Helm* that is quoted above. In the appendices to his memorandum and in supplemental filings Marrero tendered data relevant to prong (ii) (the sentences imposed on other criminals in the same jurisdiction) of *Helm*. He offered data tending to show that the punishment in Florida for a number of violent and heinous crimes, including murder, manslaughter, assault, battery, rape, kidnapping, false imprisonment, and arson, would have been less than that imposed upon him at sentencing. He filed statistical data

received from the Florida Department of Corrections, offered to show that of 26,473 inmates in Florida as of March 28, 1984 less than 300 had sentences of 100 years or greater (life and death sentences excluded), and the majority of these were for murder, sexual offenses, and robbery.<sup>5</sup> Relevant to prong (iii) (sentences imposed for commission of the same crime in other jurisdictions), Marrero discussed at length the American Bar Association's Standards for Criminal Justice, 18-4.5 (2d ed. 1982), and the statutes of a number of other states. In a supplemental filing he presented data tending to show that of an estimated 274,564 state inmates in 1979, only .8 of 1% had sentences of 98 years or more. See Bureau of Justice Statistics,

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<sup>5</sup> In addition he attached to his memorandum new sentencing guidelines of Florida and submitted that, under their criteria, he had already spent more time in confinement than would be imposed under the new guidelines.



U.S. Department of Justice, Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics - 1982 at 547 (T. Flanagan & M. McLeod 1982) (source of data).

Additionally, Marrero moved for funding under the Criminal Justice Act to obtain the services of a statistical expert, pointing out that Helm required comparison of penalties meted out in other states.

In his report and recommendation to the district court, the magistrate noted that the parties thought that statistical analysis was necessary to comply with the mandate of the Supreme Court requiring reconsideration under Helm. But he skirted this view, skirted the statistical data submitted by Marrero, and skirted the request for CJA-authorized expenses to adduce further statistical data by holding that "extensive analysis" was not required. Having rejected "extensive" analysis (at least statistical, and presumably otherwise), the magistrate reached a conclusion

based on the availability of parole to Marrero. The magistrate wrote:

To date, counsel for the parties and, indeed, the undersigned, have assumed that a full scale, extensive statistical analysis would be required in order to satisfy the mandate of the Supreme Court in this case. A review of the cases decided subsequent to *Solem* has now convinced me to the contrary. *Solem*, supra, does not require extensive analysis with respect to every excessiveness issue. The Court in *Solem* [sic] expressly did not require extensive analysis with regard to every petition for habeas corpus relief raising the Eighth Amendment proportionality issue.

The *Solem* majority opinion noted that its decision was not inconsistent with *Rummel v. Estelle*, 445 U.S. 263 [100 S.Ct. 1133, 63 L.Ed.2d 382] (1980), and that *Rummel* was controlling in similar fact situations.

In *Rummel* the petitioner was sentenced to life imprisonment for a series of rather minor offenses with eligibility for a reasonably early parole. In *Helm* the petitioner was sentenced to life

imprisonment with no possibility for parole. The Supreme Court specifically distinguished Solem from Rummel on the basis of the availability of parole, although other distinguishing factors were noted. In the instant case, although the petitioner has been sentenced to a long sentence, he, like Rummel but unlike Helm, will be eligible for early release.

(footnotes omitted). The magistrate recommended that the petition be denied and, in light of his recommended finding that Rummel applied and was not overruled by Helm, incorporated the report and recommendation he had initially filed in the case.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> In his first report and recommendation, the magistrate had recommended denying relief, relying on *Rummel v. Estelle*, 445 U.S. 263, 100 S.Ct. 1133, 63 L.Ed.2d 382 (1980), for the proposition that the length of a sentence is a matter of legislative prerogative and on *Whalen v. U.S.*, 445 U.S. 684, 100 S.Ct. 1432, 63 L.Ed.2d 715 (1980), for the proposition that consecutive sentences are a matter of legislative prerogative.

The district court entered an order in which it listed the three Helm criteria but noted that parole is an important factor in evaluating whether a sentence is unconstitutionally disproportionate and discussed at length petitioner's eligibility for parole. The court then adopted the magistrate's report and denied petition. Fairly read, the district court's order rested upon petitioner's eligibility for parole. Although Marrero had tendered data supporting Helm's criteria (ii) and (iii), and sought an expert to present additional data, the court did not refer to any criteria other than parole as a basis for decision. This reading is confirmed by the court's order denying Marrero's petition for reconsideration in which it explained its rationale for not considering Helm's proportionality analysis: "Applying this analysis to the absolute number of years imposed in the sentence would be misleading

when the possibility of parole is such that the sentence will potentially be reduced to a clearly appropriate one. *Rummel v. Estelle*, 445 U.S. 263 100 S.Ct. 1133, 63 L.Ed.2d 382 (1980)." *Marrero v. Wainwright*, No. 80-114 CIV-T-10, (M.D. Fla. Sept. 3, 1985) (unpublished order).

The district court was required to reconsider its decision in light of *Helm*. It was not mandated to automatically apply *Helm* and its criteria. It could apply *Helm* and its criteria or it could hold, based upon the proper legal grounds, that the case before it was not controlled by *Helm*. Or it could hold, as a matter of law or of fact, that some of the *Helm* criteria had probative value in this case and others did not. The court did none of these. It gave no basis for holding *Helm* was not applicable at all. If it intended to apply *Helm*, it gave no basis for extracting the sole factor of eligibility

for parole and resting its decision on that factor alone. The possibility of parole is not alone a determinative factor under Helm; it is only one element relevant to the first prong of the three prong proportionality analysis set out by the Supreme Court. In Helm the Supreme Court explicitly said that Rummel should not be read to foreclose proportionality review of sentences of imprisonment, that Rummel only rejected a proportionality challenge to a particular sentence and "is controlling only in a similar factual situation." A "similar factual situation" is not presented every time a court is faced with a case in which there is a possibility of parole.

Moreover, a remand would have been unnecessary if the possibility of parole by itself could be dispositive. There was no reason for the Supreme Court to order a remand if the only factor to be considered by the



district court was a factor - eligibility for parole, considered in light of **Rummel** - that was already before the Supreme Court.

Chief Judge Roney seems to suggest that we should assume that the Supreme Court really did not mean what it said when it remanded this case "for further consideration in light of **Solem v. Helm**." A principled system could not survive with such a basis for decision-making by courts subject to Supreme Court review. The mandate of the Supreme Court is clear.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Chief Judge Roney also suggests that a federal court has no authority to review state sentences that are within statutory limits. In **Helm**, 463 U.S. at 288 - 90, 103 S.Ct. at 3008 - 09, the Supreme Court held that the Eighth Amendment principle of proportionality applies to felony prison sentences.

In sum, we hold as a matter of principle that a criminal sentence must be proportionate to the crime for which the defendant has been convicted. Reviewing courts, of course,

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The lack of wisdom in focusing on the

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7 (cont.)

should grant substantial deference to the broad authority that legislatures necessarily possess in determining the types and limits of punishments for crimes, as well as to the discretion that trial courts possess in sentencing criminals. But no penalty is per se

constitutional.<sup>16</sup> As the Court

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16 Contrary to the dissent's suggestions, post, at 305 [103 S.Ct. at 3017], 315 [103 S.Ct. at 3022], we do not adopt or imply approval of a general rule of appellate review of sentences. Absent specific authority, it is not the role of an appellate court to substitute its judgment for that of the sentencing court as to the appropriateness of a particular sentence; rather, in applying the Eighth Amendment the appellate court decides only whether the sentencing under review is within constitutional limits. In view of the substantial deference that must be accorded legislatures and sentencing courts, a reviewing court rarely will be required to engage in extended analysis to determine that a sentence is not constitutionally disproportionate.



availability of parole to the exclusion of all other factors is demonstrated by the fact that if Marrero is arrested for even a minor charge while on parole, his parole can be revoked and he can be subjected to a 240 year sentence that has not been accorded the Helm proportionality analysis nor been the subject of a court determination on proper grounds

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7 (cont.)

noted in **Robinson v. California**, 370 U.S. [660] at 677 [82 S.Ct. 1417, 1420, 8 L.Ed.2d 758], a single day in prison may be unconstitutional in some circumstances.

**Id.** at 290, 103 S.Ct. at 3009. The Helm Court makes quite clear that a sentence within statutory limits can be found unconstitutional. Indeed, even a sentence under a recidivist statute is one "within the statutory limits," thus the limit staked out by the legislature is not of itself a barrier to the reach of the United States Constitution.

Chief Judge Roney fears that the federal courts may be called upon to conduct a proportionality review of every state case involving consecutive sentences for individual crimes. The Court itself in **Helm**, 463 U.S. at 290 n. 16, 103 S.Ct. at 3009 n. 16, answers this floodgates concern.

that **Helm** does not apply.

REVERSED and REMANDED.

RONEY, Chief Judge, dissenting.

I respectfully dissent for three reasons: First, both **Rummel v. Estelle**, 445 U.S. 263, 100 S.Ct. 1133 63 L.Ed.2d 382 (1980), and **Solem v Helm**, 463 U.S. 277, 103 S.Ct. 3001, 77 L.Ed.2d 637 (1983), involved a life sentence given under a state recidivist statute. None of the sentences here has been enhanced because of prior conduct. Marrero does not challenge the validity of the sentence received on any individual count, but rather he claims that the cumulative effect of consecutive sentences, which would not be presented if the sentences were concurrent, renders his total sentence invalid. Both **Rummel** and **Helm**, involved the imposition of life sentences after conviction of a lower class felony. The maximum sentences for felonies, ten years in **Rummel** and five years in

Helm, are consistent with the individual sentences being challenged here. The recidivist statutes of Texas and South Dakota, however, incorporated prior behavior into the sentencing analysis and life sentences were imposed. Unlike either Rummel or Helm, Marrero was not sentenced under a recidivist statute, but under the normal sentencing statute. He received only the statutory sentence for each crime. It is not cruel and unusual for a person to be held accountable to the full extent of the law for each crime of which he is convicted.

I am unsure what principle of constitutional law the Court is applying in this case. It seems to put the federal courts in the business of conducting a proportionality review of every state case involving consecutive sentences for individual crimes. That is not even required in federal court. The law of our Circuit has consistently been that

this Court has no authority to review sentences which are within the statutory limits. We have found no case where sentences for individual crimes were disturbed simply because they were consecutive.

Second, I would affirm the district court's decision that this case is more like Rummel than Helm. The availability of parole is, of course, the evident distinction between Helm and this case, just as it was the distinction between Rummel and Helm. The Court's observation that a violation of parole would cause a revocation and cause Marrero to be subjected to the prison sentence is equally applicable to Rummel and the life sentence. The 240-year sentence is in effect no more than a life sentence. As with Rummel, the possibility of parole is such that the prison sentence is subject to reduction to less than that so that the term of imprisonment would be a clearly appropriate

one. Marrero was actually released on parole on November 19, 1985.

Third, unlike Rummel and Helm, the goal defendant seeks here is to go unpunished for many of his crimes. Assuming the state could constitutionally convict Marrero of 24 separate crimes under these circumstances, a point that has not been challenged on this appeal, Marrero would constitutionally require the state to impose some concurrent sentences. That means, of course, that the Constitution would require him to go virtually unpunished for several of his crimes. A day in prison for one crime is apparently no different than a day in prison for several crimes. In neither Rummel nor Helm was there any suggestion that the state could not impose the statutory maximum sentence for the separate crimes for which the defendants were convicted. The Court here apparently would have the district court consider going further than

that, and render potentially ineffective any accountability for crimes beyond some given number, which would dictate the maximum sentence he could get for all his crimes.

This decision goes much further than the Supreme Court did in *Rummel* and *Helm*, and applies a principle which encroaches measurably upon a state's attempt to administer an effective and efficient criminal justice system.

To the extent the Court seeks sustenance from the effect of the Supreme Court's remand of this case, it is misconceived. Common knowledge has it that when an important case like *Helm* is handed down by the Supreme Court, a number of pending cases that have similar issues are simply remanded "to reconsider in the light of," with no careful determination by the Supreme Court, as to whether the key decision will or will not effect the outcome of the particular case.



To reason otherwise relies upon an exercise that the Supreme Court admittedly has not undertaken.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In response to Judge Godbold's comments on my decision in this case, I have carefully reread my dissent to see wherein I may have suggested "that the Supreme Court really did not mean what it said when it remanded the case 'for further consideration in light of **Solem v. Helm**.'" I cannot find that suggestion. If it is there, I disclaim it. All I have said is that the Supreme Court in remanding the case made no decision that **Helm** would in fact change the outcome of this case. I stand by that view.

As to whether the district court reconsidered the case in light of **Helm**, I attach in full the district court opinion and the magistrate's report and recommendation so that the reader can decide whether the magistrate and the district court have followed the Supreme Court mandate.

The following of legal precedent should result in like facts receiving like results. The district court found that this case was more like **Rummel** than **Helm**. I agree. We may be wrong, but it is not because we have not tried to fairly apply both **Helm** and **Rummel**, two decisions that are difficult to reconcile.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA  
TAMPA DIVISION  
BENITO MARRERO, Plaintiff,

-vs-

LOUIE L. WAINWRIGHT, Secretary,  
Department of Corrections,  
State of Florida, Defendant,

No. 80-114 Civ-T-110

ORDER

This cause is before the Court on a motion for reconsideration of the Court's denial of a habeas corpus petition following remand from the Supreme Court for reconsideration of Petitioner's Eighth Amendment claim in light of *Solem v. Helm*, 463 U.S. 277, 103 S.Ct. 3001, 77 L.Ed.2d 637 (1983).

In his motion for reconsideration, Petitioner asserts that the issue of the voluntariness of his confession should have been addressed by the Magistrate on remand. The Supreme Court in *Marrero v. Wainwright*, 463 U.S. 1223, 103 S.Ct. 3567, 77 L.Ed.2d 1407 (1983), remanded the case for reconsideration



in light of **Solem**. **Solem** addressed only the Eighth Amendment. Reconsidering in light of **Solem** does not require revisiting the holding in respect to a Fifth Amendment claim of involuntary confession.

Petitioner also asserts the failure of the Magistrate to consider the proportionality analysis enunciated in **Solem**. Applying this analysis to the absolute number of years imposed in the sentence would be misleading when the possibility of parole is such that the sentence will potentially be reduced to a clearly appropriate one. **Rummel v. Estelle**, 445 U.S. 263, 100 S.Ct. 1133, 63 L.Ed.2d 382 (1980). In light of the Florida Supreme Court decision, **Lowry v. Parole & Probation Commission**, 10 F.L.W. 314, 473 So.2d 1248 (S.Ct.Fla. 1985), parole for the Petitioner continues to be likely. It is not necessary that the Petitioner be able to enforce parole as a matter of right in order for the

possibility of parole to be a deciding factor in assessing his sentence under the Eighth Amendment. *Rummel v. Estelle*, 100 S.Ct. at 1142 - 43. Petitioner's attempts to distinguish *Rummel* on the basis that the punishment imposed on Petitioner was a result of judicial discretion rather than legislative mandate are unpersuasive.

Petitioner, asserting that he is proceeding in forma pauperis, also complains of the language of the order of June 27, 1985 stating "each party shall bear its own costs". Accordingly, the Court's order is amended to read "the government shall bear its own cost" and upon due consideration Petitioner's motion for reconsideration is DENIED.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

DONE and ORDERED at Tampa, Florida, this 3rd day of September 1985.

/s/ W. Terrell Hodges  
United States District Judge

## REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

THIS CAUSE came on for consideration of a petition for writ of habeas corpus filed by a state prisoner, BENITO MARRERO, pro se, in forma pauperis. This case is presently before this court on remand from the Supreme Court, for consideration of petitioner's Eighth Amendment claim in light of *Solem v. Helm* 463 U.S. 277, 103 S.Ct. 3001, 77 L.Ed.2d 637 (1983).

Petitioner was convicted of twelve counts of breaking and entering motel rooms and twelve counts of burglary of television sets in the rooms, all offenses occurring in one motel in one criminal episode. Consecutive sentences were imposed upon said convictions for a total of 240 years imprisonment. Petitioner asserts that he is entitled to full scale discovery in order to conduct extensive proportionality analysis under the Eighth Amendment. Petitioner's counsel has

advised this court that no statistical analysis presently exists from any known source which would be material to the extended analysis necessary to determine if petitioner's sentences are not constitutionally disproportionate. As a first stage in obtaining the statistics which petitioner's counsel maintains are necessary to the development of his case, petitioner seeks advance authority under the Criminal Justice Act to employ a statistical expert for a fee of \$2,500.00, not including necessary court appearances.

To date, counsel for the parties and, indeed, the undersigned, have assumed that a full scale, extensive statistical analysis would be required in order to satisfy the mandate of the Supreme Court in this case. A review of the cases decided subsequent to *Solem* has now convinced me to the contrary. *Solem*, *supra*, does not require extensive analysis with respect to every excessiveness

issue. The Court in **Solem** expressly did not require extensive analysis with regard to every petition for habeas corpus relief raising the Eighth Amendment proportionality issue.<sup>1</sup>

The **Solem** majority opinion noted that its decision was not inconsistent with **Rummel v. Estelle**, 445 U.S. 263, 100 S.Ct. 1133, 63 L.Ed.2d 382 (1980), and that **Rummel** was controlling in similar fact situations.<sup>2</sup>

In **Rummel** the petitioner was sentenced to life imprisonment for a series of rather minor offenses with eligibility for a reasonably early parole. In **Helm** the petitioner was sentenced to life imprisonment with no

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<sup>1</sup> **Solem**, 103 S.Ct. at 3009, n. 16; **Moreno v. Estelle**, 717 F.2d 171, 180 (5th Cir. 1984); see also **Whitmore v. Maggio**, 742 F.2d 230, 234 (5th Cir. 1984).

<sup>2</sup> **Solem**, supra [103 S.Ct.] at 3013 - 3014, and 3015 - 3016. See also **Moreno v. Estelle**, 717 F.2d 171 at 179 - 181.

possibility for parole. The Supreme Court specifically distinguished **Solem** from **Rummel** on the basis of the availability of parole, although other distinguishing factors were noted.<sup>3</sup> In the instant case, although the petitioner has been sentenced to a long sentence, he like **Rummel** but unlike **Helm**, will be eligible for early release.<sup>4</sup>

Accordingly, I recommend that the petitioner's Eighth Amendment claim be denied as

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<sup>3</sup> **Moreno**, 717 F.2d 171, 180 n. 11 (5th Cir. 1984).

<sup>4</sup> **Rummel** became eligible for parole after serving approximately 12 years. **Rummel** supra, 445 U.S. at 267, 100 S.Ct. at 1135. Petitioner's counsel advised the undersigned that, according to a Florida Department of Corrections official, petitioner may be released as early as November 25, 1985, after serving approximately 10 years. Petitioner's eligibility for early release was not disclosed to the Supreme Court in briefs filed by the parties with that court and apparently was not a factor considered in its remand for consideration under **Solem**. See copies of briefs filed herein on April 24, 1984.



being without merit and that the petition for writ of habeas corpus be dismissed, this 10th day of January, 1985.<sup>5</sup>

/s/ Paul Game, Jr.

PAUL GAME, JR.

United States Magistrate

NOTE: This matter was referred to the United States Magistrate pursuant to the Standing Order of this Court and Local Rule 6.01(c)(17). Failure to file written objections to the proposed findings and recommendations contained in this report shall bar an aggrieved party from attacking the factual findings on appeal. 28 U.S.C. §636(b)(1). Local Rule 6.02; **Nettles v. Wainwright**, 677 F.2d 404 (5th Cir. 1982). Because this Report and Recommendation contains conclusions of law which may be novel

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<sup>5</sup> The Report and Recommendation previously filed in this case is incorporated herein by reference in light of the finding that **Rummel** applies and was not over-ruled by **Solem**.

in light of the recent cases cited and the conclusions reached, the time for filing objections is extended, and petitioner may file written objections to this report within 30 days from date of service of this report.



